

REPORT
OF THE
UNITED STATES
BUREAU OF EFFICIENCY

FOR THE PERIOD FROM
NOVEMBER 1, 1922
—TO—
OCTOBER 31, 1923



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REPORT
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UNITED STATES
BUREAU OF EFFICIENCY



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

U. S. BUREAU OF EFFICIENCY,
Washington, November 15, 1923.

To the PRESIDENT:

I submit herewith a report of the character and progress of the work of the Bureau of Efficiency during the period from November 1, 1922, to October 31, 1923.

Very respectfully,

HERBERT D. BROWN,
Chief, Bureau of Efficiency.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF BUREAU OF EFFICIENCY, 1923.

INTRODUCTION.

The appropriation for the Bureau of Efficiency for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1923, was \$145,000. The same amount was appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1924.

On October 31, 1923, the staff of the bureau consisted of the following: The chief, the assistant chief, 28 investigators and accountants, 18 clerks, and 3 messengers, a total force of 51.

The statutory duties of the bureau include the establishment and general supervision of a standard system of efficiency ratings for the classified service in the District of Columbia, the investigation of the needs of the several executive departments and independent establishments with respect to personnel, and the investigation of duplication of work and methods of business in the various branches of the Government service. The chief of the bureau, or an alternate designated by him, is required under the classification act of 1923 to serve with the Director of the Bureau of the Budget and a member of the Civil Service Commission, or their alternates, as a personnel classification board. The bureau is also required by that act to render to the personnel classification board such cooperation and assistance as the board may require.

The work of the bureau has continued along the same general lines as mentioned in the last annual report, namely:

Duplication of work.

Business methods.

Personnel.

DUPPLICATION OF WORK.

At the request of the Bureau of the Budget, the Bureau of Efficiency during the past year investigated and reported on a number of alleged duplications of work between various branches of the Government. The investigations demonstrated that no duplication of work actually existed, but that the bureaus were working in complete harmony with one another and under well-defined divisions of the fields involved. The bureau has also checked against its index of Government activities, reports covering 73 new investigations to be undertaken by various bureaus in the several executive departments for the purpose of guarding against duplication of work.

INDEX OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES.

The bureau's Index of Government Activities has been kept current during the year. Besides being of great value in the prevention of duplication of work it has served to answer many hundreds of inquiries, both official and private, pertaining to governmental activities.

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION.

The bureau has continued to render assistance to the Joint Congressional Committee on Departmental Reorganization. The preparation of monographs descriptive of various Government services and establishments has continued to such extent as more pressing work permitted.

BUSINESS METHODS.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Militia Bureau.—The Secretary of War recently requested the bureau to make an examination of the business methods employed in the Militia Bureau. This investigation is now in progress.

Contract audit section.—An examination of the contract audit section of the office of Chief of Finance was made and suggestions were submitted respecting organization, personnel, and procedure.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

Office of the Treasurer of the United States.—At the request of the Treasurer the bureau cooperated with the Treasury Department in making an examination of the accounts and methods relating to the sinking fund of the District of Columbia and to certain other similar funds. The accounts were brought up to date and a number of simplifications introduced.

Bureau of Engraving and Printing, control accounting.—In May, 1923, the Secretary of the Treasury appointed a member of the bureau's staff as a member of a departmental committee to study the accounting procedure of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The work is now in progress.

Bureau of Internal Revenue.—The survey of the Bureau of Internal Revenue requested by the commissioner in July, 1921, was continued during the past year, and a number of improved procedures have been suggested.

At the request of the commissioner a survey of the work of the prohibition unit has recently been undertaken, with a view to suggesting improvements in organization and methods.

Public Debt Service.—The survey of the Public Debt Service requested by the commissioner in April, 1922, was completed during

the past year. A number of recommendations were submitted and adopted without material change. In some instances substantial savings have been effected.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

Bureau of Pensions.—At the request of the Bureau of Pensions the Bureau of Efficiency assisted the budget officer of that establishment in providing a better means of estimating the amount of appropriations needed for the payment of pensions and for certain administrative activities.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

At the request of the department a survey of the division of supplies was made, and a complete reorganization of methods and procedure effected.

A detailed survey was also made of the central files of the department and a report embodying recommendations in filing procedure was submitted, as a result of which a number of changes in method were made and a considerable saving in personnel effected.

A study of methods in the office of the appointment clerk was undertaken and the recommendations made were put into effect without material exception.

A survey of the procedure and methods of the mail and files division of the Bureau of Investigation is now in progress.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Space investigation.—The survey of the housing facilities of the several bureaus composing the Department of Agriculture requested by the Secretary in October, 1922, was completed during the year. The report submitted contained recommendations for a reassignment of space with a view to bringing together in one building or in close proximity the quarters of offices doing the same or related work.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

Mail equipment shop.—At the request of the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General, a study was made of the record system relating to the mail locks and keys used in the Postal Service. Under the recommendations adopted some of the records were discontinued and others consolidated, resulting in a simplification of the work.

VETERANS' BUREAU.

Supply division.—An investigation is being made of the methods in vogue in the supply division of the Veterans' Bureau in response to the request of the director of that bureau. While this investiga-

tion has not been completed, a number of recommendations have been made and adopted which will result in material improvements in the service.

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION.

Bureau of Valuation.—At the request of the chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission a detailed survey was made of the organization and methods of the Bureau of Valuation. The report submitted outlined changes in organization and methods to enable the work to be handled more expeditiously and economically. Favorable action has been taken on the report.

SURVEY OF GASOLINE CONSUMPTION.

A survey of the methods employed by the Government in the purchase, storage, and distribution of gasoline was made at the request of the Chief Coordinator. The report submitted embodied suggestions for changes in the methods of purchasing and distributing gasoline in the District of Columbia which are expected to result in substantial savings.

GOVERNMENT PURCHASING METHODS.

At the request of the Federal Purchasing Board the bureau appointed, in February, 1923, a representative on a committee organized to investigate purchasing methods of the departments and establishments of the Federal Government. That committee is now engaged upon a detailed survey of existing supply organizations and facilities as well as of methods.

Several instances have been brought to light where the Government, under the existing form of running indefinite contracts, has been paying considerably in excess of prices obtainable under contracts more definite as to the quantities to be furnished and more limited as to time of delivery. Action has already been taken with respect to a number of commodities in the direction of adopting more specific contracts of shorter term.

A member of the staff of the bureau is now serving as executive chairman of the Federal Purchasing Board by designation of the Chief Coordinator.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Besides the work mentioned above the bureau has upon calls from a number of Government offices or committees or Members of Congress engaged in the study of a considerable number of problems arising in connection with organization and management. The

bureau has continued to cooperate closely with the Bureau of the Budget, making several special investigations at the request of that bureau.

PERSONNEL.

UNIFORM EFFICIENCY RATINGS.

Under the act approved August 23, 1912 (37 Stat., 413, 414), as amended by the act approved February 28, 1916 (29 Stat., 15), requiring the Bureau of Efficiency, with the approval of the President, to "establish a system of efficiency ratings for the classified service in the several executive departments in the District of Columbia," and in pursuance of the Executive order of the President of October 24, 1921, the bureau has continued the work of coordinating the rating of the efficiency of the employees in the classified service in the District of Columbia.

Efficiency ratings in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.—In November, 1922, a request was received from the Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for assistance in the establishment of a system of efficiency ratings for the employees of that organization. Large numbers of employees in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing are engaged in such clerical-mechanical processes as counting, examining, assorting, pressing, and trimming sheets of paper. The plan is to install individual production, error, and time records throughout the various divisions as a basis for determining the efficiency of the personnel. Such records have now been established in one of the largest divisions, and they will shortly be extended throughout the remaining branches.

In connection with this work the Bureau of Efficiency, upon the request of the director, devised a formula for rating plate printers for the purpose of enabling the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to carry out the provisions of the act of Congress approved January 3, 1923. In carrying out this provision of the act the services of more than 250 plate printers were dispensed with. The employees dismissed were selected in accordance with efficiency ratings based upon the formula recommended.

The Bureau of Efficiency has since endeavored to find employment for the men released and a considerable number have been placed in other branches of the service. This has been accomplished by securing consideration for these men when vacancies have arisen which they appeared qualified to fill.

RECLASSIFICATION OF SALARIES.

The act providing for the classification of civilian positions within the District of Columbia and in the field services of the

Government (42 Stat., 1488) was approved March 4, 1923. That act created an ex officio board known as the Personnel Classification Board, which consists of the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, a member of the Civil Service Commission, and the Chief of the Bureau of Efficiency, or alternates designated by those organizations. The act provides that the Bureau of Efficiency shall render the board such cooperation and assistance as may be required for the performance of its duties. Accordingly a large part of the staff of the bureau has been detailed to the board for the greater part of the fiscal year.

